THE NEWS LETTER

OF THE COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

III SCHENECTADY, N. Y., JANUARY, 1941 No. 1

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ond Annual Meeting CEA

e following national officers elected, to serve for the cur- ear:

sident, Norman Foerster, Uni- y of Iowa; 1st Vice-President, ery Bailey, Stanford Univer- 2nd Vice-President, H. F. y, Princeton University; Direc- for a term of three years: m C. DeVane, Yale Univer- Elizabeth Manwaring, Welles- ollege; W. O. Sypherd, Uni- y of Delaware; Secretary, s Johnson, Union College; urer, Wm. H. Richardson, e of William and Mary.

second annual meeting of the e English Association was n conjunction with the MLA ng in Boston December 26, 27, 8. Because of the necessary ting of approximately sixty nt sessions of various organi- s into three days between tmas Day and Sunday, the of adjustment was a difficult for the general manager of affairs, Executive Secretary Long. If our young associa- had had longer experience these annual meetings, it probably have curtailed its am in such a year. As it was, f our meetings was held on day morning before some ers had arrived, and another held Saturday evening after had started for home. De- these handicaps each meeting well attended, the papers were and full of meat, and the dis- ons lively. Brief summaries e subject matter will follow, ded by Messrs. Sypher and orth of Simmons College.

e annual dinner was scheduled aturday noon and thus unfor- ely conflicted with a luncheon ng called by the College Sec- of the National Council,— a ct unintentional and undesir- he luncheon program was con- to an address by retiring dent De Vane, and unusual en- nment provided by Mrs. Helen landers of Springfield, Ver- who brought with her a r of old ballads of English Irish origin carried down gh generations of Vermonters New Hampshire folk; and a ont fiddler who played some e old-time jigs and country tunes.

mediately following dinner dent De Vane took the chair called for reports from the tary and the treasurer and nominating committee. The urer announced a comfortable us in the treasury, and the tary's report supplemented y pointing out that money ad- d at the launching of the new iation from a small Carnegie was more than covered by reasury balance; so that if return of this advance ever seemed advisable the CEA would still be solvent. It has in fact never been "in the red." The report of the Nominating Committee was approved, after the name of the retiring president had been substituted for one proposed director, thus continuing the precedent of retaining the wise counsel of an ex-president on the board of directors for three more years.

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At the first session, on Thursday morning, December 26, two aspects of "The English Major" were discussed by Dorothy Bethurun (Connecticut College) and Robert Cawley (Princeton University). Professor Bethurun, speaking on "A History of the Language in the English Major," made an unequivocal appeal for such a course, particularly for those majors in English who plan to enter teaching. Whether this course runs for a year or a semester, whether it is organized chronologically or topically, it is the most useful instrument for combating the prevailing ignorance of our own language. It is particularly important for those who enter high-school teaching; because of the false emphasis on "education," many such teachers need know little about language provided they are aware of how many cubic feet of air per hour each student ought to breathe.

Professor Bethurun developed in detail the manifold uses of the course in the history of English: invariably, she said, the search for meanings leads to the past; the study of language can afford training in the discipline of science; the analysis of propaganda involves a knowledge of the instrument of propaganda — language; the study of language can become a study of English culture; and sensitivity to historical meanings increases sensitivity to the written and spoken word.

In the discussion which followed her paper, Professor Bethurun stressed the importance of humanizing the course in language and of relating it to the other languages over which the student has even partial command; it may be feasible to use Chaucer as a focal point.

Professor Cawley traced in detail the operation of the Princeton preceptorial and tutorial systems. The latter, or upper-class plan of study, is designed to enable the mature

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Notice

The usual delay in assembling copy for the January *News Letter* makes a four-page issue seem advisable. Messages from our incoming and retiring Presidents, and other important communications are held over until February.

Notice

Members still in arrears of dues for the year 1940 (their number is satisfactorily small) must now be dropped from the membership rolls. They will receive this issue of the News Letter as a matter of courtesy, but further mailings to them will be discontinued.

What Is "Life On An Ethical Basis?"

I protest the attack upon Vincent Sheean by Edd Winfield Parks in "The Washing of Hands" in the November *News Letter*. I am moved to this protest not only because I think the term *cynical* is grotesquely inappropriate for Sheean in his writings—even in this short quotation—or in his conversation, but also because the article assumes that a weighing and analysis of political creeds and figures are the sacred duty of every author.

I chanced to talk rather at length with Sheean—or to listen to him talk—in October, 1939, just as the articles in the *New Republic* were being written. I was impressed, even more than in *Personal History*, by the spontaneity and energy of his feeling and thought, and by the difficulty of distinguishing between the two. In reply to a comment of mine, he stated that detached critical analysis and statistical balances were impossible and foreign to him; that he was interested primarily in people, singly or in groups, and that he followed intuition rather than an attempted detached judgment, because it was natural to him and because he felt it was ultimately surer. He avowed impatience with painstaking analysis and careful weighing of doctrines as omitting, after all, the unpredictable factor that might upset all calculation—human beings.

At that time Sheean was absorbed in Russia and I realized that Russia's stand was to him the most shocking event of the war—the war that he had predicted, with its exact date, a year before, relying in his prediction entirely upon his intuitive perceptions of people and their passions.

The defense of Sheean that I am offering is that he writes sincerely and with intense conviction of the things that have meaning for him. If he is, as Mr. Parks says, "a famous and widely read author," isn't it because that sincerity brings meaning to his readers?

We have come far from Jefferson's "eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man" when we must examine an author as to how he feels about Stalin or Marx or Adam Smith and how much he is going to say of them before we give him leave to speak sincerely.

Miriam R. Small,
Wells College.

Can We Teach the Art of Criticism to Undergraduates

One would like to think this only a rhetorical question. If we can't, presumably we ought to go out of business as teachers of literature. Yet we all know that it is a difficult business; that, in fact, many of us do go out of it, into something that is indispensable to criticism but that often stops short of the art itself—literary history.

After nearly eighteen years of teaching variously in a humanistic (not New Humanist) English department in a college of Architecture and engineering, in a liberal arts college, and in a graduate professional school of education, I still stubbornly believe that it is possible to teach the art of criticism to undergraduates. But to do so, the teacher must have a clearly conceived and mastered art of criticism himself — certainly something more than the romantic intuitions with which most of us started. There's the rub, certainly, for my generation, and I suspect for others.

Most of us who were schooled in the 1920's found our teachers moving energetically with their times — in the van of the most remarkable period of specialized scientific and historical fact-finding, I imagine, that the world has known. Critical values were not ignored, exactly, but they were more commonly assumed than examined. We gained a very good set of hunches about literary values in seven years or so of undergraduate and graduate work, but our critical bearings lacked the explicitness of our admirably rigorous research techniques in literary history and biography, in comparative literature, and in the history of ideas. When we went forth zealously to our first jobs, not many of us had considered how undergraduates, often less interested than we were in literature, might be brought to share our critical intuitions in somewhat less than seven years.

I doubt if we did much harm, actually, during our romantic first years. Some students even learned a good deal about human nature from our more or less Johnsonian, Crocean or Menckenese sallies; and sometimes our neat critical quips on their critical papers must have been good for something more than a sign that we were "good fellows" — more recently "good guys." But I know we did not teach them much about the art of criticism, if by criticism we mean a systematic inquiry into literary values with the aid of carefully considered criteria.

Mr. Adler had not then brought Aristotle back to life, or to something that resembles life. The New Humanists were crying for "values," but they were "cultist" and

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IN PRIMIS EVITANDVS
EST MAGISTER ARIDVS

Editorial

Some doubt has been expressed as to the antiquity of the proverbs quoted at the head of our editorial column in the December issue. If English teachers cannot depend upon the "News Letter" for authoritativeness and accuracy, what recourse have they? We ask you!

Professor George Dwight Kellogg, arbiter with Father McCarron as to ancient tongues, so far as this pillar of erudition is concerned, has traced those proverbs as far toward their source as he cared to go, and has discovered them in the Latin.

Num est necesse fructus doctrinae in palato nil sapere ac difficles esse concotioni? (Must the fruits of scholarship be of necessity unexciting to the palate and heavy to digest?)

Minerva olim virgo fuit lepidissima facie vestituque liberali. (The Goddess of Wisdom among the ancients was a lady of pleasing countenance, graciously garbed.)

"It is to A. Pittius Scriba," writes Dr. Kellogg, "a late and somewhat obscure grammarian, that we owe the preservation of the Latin form of these proverbs:" and he aptly quotes a dictum of the great Quintilian: *"In primis evitandus est magister aridus.* (Especially ought a dry teacher to be shunned.)"

American teachers of English must feel a peculiarly intimate relationship to English teachers in Britain, the cradle of the language and literature we teach; and this regardless of any theories we may individually hold as to the war. Assuming such loyalty to our colleagues overseas, your Secretary has taken the responsibility of asking whether our College English Association could be of service in any way to the English Association of Great Britain in this time of their great trial. The English Association puts out certain publications including *Essays and Studies,* a periodical entitled *English,* and a volume entitled *The Year's work in English Studies.* Following is the British answer to our inquiries, and it is evident that there are ways in which we might collaborate.

The English Association
London, England.
December 5, 1940

My dear Sir,

You have already received an acknowledgement of your letter of September 19th in which the College English Association kindly offered to become responsible for the 1941 Volume of the English Association's *Essays and Studies.* You were then informed that all the arrangements for that Volume had already been made and that, in any case, the Oxford University Press takes almost the whole financial responsibility for *Essays and Studies* and is ready to continue doing so.

Owing to war conditions our committee meetings are less frequent than usual, but one has been been recently held at which your kind letter was read. Its spirit was much appreciated and our committee would be glad to welcome cooperation in other ways, if this can be arranged satisfactorily. From the financial point of view what would help us most would be if the College Association could help to support our magazine *English,* which is published thrice a year, and which you probably know. In return for a financial contribution of a satisfactory kind, the Editor of *English,* W. George Corkson, would be pleased to insert articles by your members of the type and standard which have appeared in *English.*

Another way in which you could help us would be by either giving a subvention to *The Year's Work in English Studies,* of which I am editor, or by promising to take a number of copies of this annual volume. At present I have all the contributors to it that are needed, including Prof. Allardyce Nicoll of Yale, who deals with publications on Shakespeare.

If any of your members come over to England in happier days, we should be pleased to welcome them to our meetings and lectures.

I have, on behalf of our Committee, put forward suggestions which might form at any rate a basis for discussion. I have had a letter from Sir Stephen Gaselee, Librarian of our Foreign Office, saying that he hopes that your Association and ours can come to an arrangement for the benefit of teachers and scholars in both countries.

Yours very sincerely,
Frederick S. Boas,
(Chairman of Committee of
The English Association)

A confirming letter (reaching us through the good offices of the British Embassy, the Foreign Office, and the British Library of Information in New York) expresses official appreciation of our offer and our interest.

The information is added that the home of Dr. Boas in London has been seriously damaged by a bomb, and that he will continue the correspondence from Oxford.

Members of the CEA are being asked by direct letter to vote upon certain questions of policy and upon certain actions referred to the membership at large by the members attending our annual business meeting. Among these questions is a request for an expression of your wishes as to action in behalf of the English Association overseas or in collaboration with it.

Other questions which members will be asked to answer are as follows: Shall English teachers in junior colleges be admitted? They are now constitutionally barred, unless they joined before the adoption of our constitution. Arguments advanced a year ago were that the National Council was more obviously entitled to their membership, and we should do nothing to increase the apparent conflict between the two associations. But many junior-college teachers are pressing the question.

What is the reaction of members toward Dean DeVane's proposal that Regional Groups in the CEA be encouraged and their authority emphasized, and less effort and time be given to the annual meeting?

Finally, members are asked for a frank expression of opinion as to present and future relationship to the National Council and the MLA. Our organization has greatly profited from the cordial friendliness of the MLA and its invitation to associate ourselves with its annual meeting and have space in its printed program. As to the National Council, members of its College Section urge that there is duplication of purpose and effort in our two associations, and that the younger should consent to some sort of merger. It seems proper to secure the views of the entire membership on such questions as these.

Letters on "Criticism" Courses

Dear Editor:

Any help that you and the *"News Letter"* can give the cause of criticism as a respectable college course will have my hearty support. The historical and biographical approach to literature and the newer sociological approach have resulted in graduate students who are helpless babies when confronted with modern literature and asked to judge for themselves. Most of them have at best only a wide acquaintance with the best of the past. And that, most emphatically, is not enough.

May I suggest that the place to begin is, paradoxically, in the examination for the Master's degree. Our freshmen are taught by Masters. You could do more to establish canons of good criticism by supplying the freshmen with instructors who know good literature from bad, and know WHY they know, than by any other single move.

This suggestion ties in with one of my standing complaints. Masters are woefully unprepared to teach freshmen, and most of them must teach freshmen. As a minimum they should have a wide acquaintance with literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries — the literature their students will read—along with an understanding of the forces at work in modern society and some sort of critical standard by which to judge.

As you may gather, I think criticism to be more than the ability to comment on other books of the same content or kind. For the undergraduate such criticism is merely the comparison of the unknown with the unknown. And I think criticism to be more than appreciation. It should be firm and hard, even though it may occasionally be painfully wrong.

I can sum up by saying that what we need in our schools is a group of teachers with training in criticism. Put courses in criticism — not historical surveys of criticism, but active, working, practicing courses — in the requirements for the Master's degree. Undergraduates will follow.

A. J. Walker,
Georgia School of Technology,
Atlanta, Georgia.

Dear Editor:

I believe it unwise to apply the term "creative art" to criticism. Criticism is judging, and the best criticism is dependent certainly upon discerning taste and upon broad knowledge of the excellently wrought, but also upon the ability to recognize excellence even in new and in unfamiliar patterns. The function of the critic when judging is not to create a new work of art, but to interpret and to evaluate what has been created.

I think that of more interest than my own opinions, however, will be the report of a discussion of literary criticism in the undergraduate classroom. Professor Edd Winfield Parks of the University of Georgia led such a discussion for a group of members of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association which met recently at Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

I shall present two questions that I introduced into that discussion and give in answer the consensus of opinion of the group.

Question One: What percentage of the students in an undergraduate class in literary criticism show some definite improvement in critical ability during the course of study?

Answer: Usually, at least half of the students show an appreciable improvement, and some few progress so rapidly as to indicate that they have at last come into an element that is really their own.

Question Two: What one teaching device is most helpful in sharpening the student's critical faculties?

Answer: It seems most helpful to furnish anonymous selections for the student to use for practice in criticizing, and then have the student's own judgments criticized by his fellow students and later by his instructor.

Whether or not you find the answers to these questions significant, I hope you will find them interesting. I believe the latter answer may prove helpful to some; and that the former, if true, justifies the teaching of literary criticism to undergraduates.

Griffith T. Pugh,
Winthrop College

First Things First

Last winter, the Middle Atlantic Section of CEA set about discovering why entering freshmen have not been trained to read general literature intelligently and to write simple, lucid, coherent prose. The Section drew up a statement of the training it felt desirable and then said, in effect, to representatives of the schools in this area, "We feel that the product you send us is poorly prepared to do what we have come to consider college work. Your graduates should know more grammar, functional if you like; they should write more and correct their blunders under supervision; they should be trained in reading for essential ideas. Can't you do something for us?"

We received a cordial reply which may be summarized as follows: "What you say may well be true. But remember that high school enrollment has increased from 250,000 to slightly over 7,000,000 in this country in the last fifty years, with the result that college preparation for the few has been subordinated as a general aim to terminal education for the many, who spread over a wide range of abilities. And since we cannot escape this situation, would it not be helpful if we merely tried to give the upper half of our students better training in composition and careful reading, and ceased trying to differentiate between those who are going to college and those who are not? Only one sixth of our graduates go to college anyway, among them many inferior students who we feel are the colleges' responsibility if the colleges admit them. Many of the students do not know whether they are going to college or not. And is there much difference between what you want in a freshman and what we should do for any intelligent high school graduate? Furthermore, do not forget that we teach just what you want taught all the time, but that our students forget it as yours do.

"Is not the problem to establish a standard of preparation in composition and dreading ability which our students and teachers can both have before them as a goal. We should be glad to have you send copies of your specifications to our teachers, and to work out with you a test which will measure what you feel to be training in English desirable for entering freshmen"

At its meeting at George Washington University, Nov. 16, the Section voted to send copies of its principles to the schools and colleges of the region, and to cooperate with the schools in formulating the suggested test. The Section feels warm satisfaction in the cordial relations that have developed between it and the responsible officials of the schools in its region. And in the resolute forwarding of its project, it hopes to win the good will of the teachers and to enlighten the high school students in what will be expected of them, with a resulting improvement in the training of those who enter its freshman English courses in the future. It will report further progress in the *News Letter*.

Robert T. Fitzhugh, Secretary
Middle Atlantic Section, CEA

Annual Meeting of CEA

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student to think across special fields and special problems and to gain a comprehensive grasp of the scope of English from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries. During his sophomore year the student who is to enter this system plans his program with his supervisor. By the end of his junior year he has completed his general survey of the literature from Chaucer to our day, together with a course in Old English and a history of the language. During this year he writes a series of essays of from 3,000 to 5,000 words upon special authors or special subjects. At the end of his junior year he selects, with his supervisor, a subject of special investigation upon which he will concentrate during his last year. The summer is spent in reading for this investigation, which is supposed to deal with an inclusive subject. The resulting thesis or report is between 25,000 and 100,000 words. At the conclusion of the senior year, comprehensive examinations embracing the whole range of his work since his second year compel a final integration of material. There are no grades given for particular pieces of work; the student receives only one grade for everything he has done. The system is still in the experimental stage, Professor Cawley reported, but it has succeeded in drawing from those who are in it their best work ; furthermore, it has succeeded in cutting across departmental lines.

The general topic of the Thursday afternoon meeting was "The Use of Criticism in Teaching Undergraduates:" The first paper by Arthur Mizener of Wells College, discussed the use of criticism in teaching the drama, and was based on Marlowe's The *Doctor Faustus*. The second paper, using *The Killers* to illustrate the use of criticism in teaching the short story, was read by Cleanth Brooks of Louisiana State University. Mr. Brooks also served as chairman of the meeting. Robert Penn Warren, of Connecticut State College, scheduled to give the Hemingway paper, was unable to attend; and Mr. Brooks read it in his absence; explaining that the paper was really a joint effort of himself and Mr. Warren.

Mr. Mizener pointed out the weaknesses of two familiar methods of teaching the Eilizabethan drama, particularly the plays of Marlowe, to undergraduates: one consists of a lush intoning of speeches like "Is this the face," with the standard comments on "Marlowe's mighty line," reducing the impassioned expression of a fundamental human problem to "the rhetoric of sentimentality;" the other is the arid — for undergraduates — approach by the methods of textual criticism. He then demonstrated how "concrete, significant, and moving" a critical approach might be made by relating speeches like "Is this the face" to the play as a whole and to the body of Marlowe's work; and by discovering in the dramatic conflict between Faustus and Mephistopheles an expression of the philo-

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Can We Teach Criticism?

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suspect. And so, when it dawned on us that we could not continue to struggle on a basis of romantic intuition, most of us turned to the comforts of our historical disciplines. If we were still a little stubborn, we turned to courses in the history of criticism. But criticism itself we left largely to the romantic new crop of teachers.

All this was nobody's fault in particular, then. *Our* teachers naturally assumed that we had absorbed what they had learned about literary values from *their* teachers; and in a way we had. Such assumptions are common to every generation of teachers, and even to every questing individual teacher, who is inclined to feel that what he painstakingly taught in his younger days has become common knowledge, and need not be repeated for new students.

But it is distinctly our fault if we allow the art of criticism to be vague and largely impressionistic now. Students today are demanding positive statements of values and positive techniques —"things they can be sure of," that give them a feeling of some competence in an uncertain world. Hence the appeal of Mr. Adler's absolutistic version of Aristotle, and his medieval grammar, rhetoric, logic, which enables young men of legalistic temper to confound their elders and sometimes their betters — as Benjamin Franklin observed in the *Autobiography*. The appeal of I. A. Richards' modernized, psychologized, relativistic grammar-rhetoric-logic, preferred by the progressives, is another case in point — fairly definite, even if not free from obscurities.

The art of criticism need not be dogmatic in order to be definite. To give only one example — the approach to human values and artistic values through comparative critical examination of cultural symbols and patterns in literature, which the comparative literature scholar shares with the anthropologist (and in some measure developed from that of the anthropologist when Posnett, Miller and others were providing disciplines for comparative literature fifty years ago, even as the anthropologist borrowed from literature), is congenial to most teachers of English, although it has become somewhat obscured by the fact-finding pre-occupation. The symbolizing of values is of great concern to artists, and these symbols accordingly provide a vital point of contact between artist and critic. They are a matter in which students are being increasingly schooled in the social studies, falling short, however, of individual humanistic emphasis which we would seek.

This is not, of course, the only modern broad approach to criticism which invites all the resources of scholarship, rather than repudiates them in favor of ancient or medieval formulas. The more philological "history of ideas" approach also holds promise of a happy balance of the historical and critical emphasis. But the symbolic method of comparative literature is the more appealing, demonstrably more immediate in meaning for undergraduates. The method is strongly implicit in the Humanities courses which have appeared in more than fifty American colleges during the past dozen years. With their emphasis on "human values for the individual" through all the arts (complementing the "social values" of the Social Sciences, and the objective "scientific values" of the Natural Sciences) the method is bound to become quite explicit. As a signer of the statement of the Committee of Twenty-Four two years ago, I felt that we were approaching such explicitness, even if we did not quite achieve it.

From observing a good many Humanities programs, including the work of our own group of liberal arts college and selected high school teachers who are doing a series of co-ordinated studies in the teaching of the Humanities,* and as a worker in the Barnard-Columbia-Teachers College co-operative program for the professional education of liberal arts college graduates, I am convinced that, in point of view and framework, the broad Humanities setting and the comparative literature technique foster the art of criticism as our older freshman and sophomore English patterns commonly did not. And not the least of its virtues, I believe, is that the framework is not the work of Aristotelians, or New Humanists, or professional educators, but of groups of energetic modern liberal arts teachers and scholars who are seeking in the ancient and honorable name of the Humanities to evaluate, select, and synthesize the best achievements of our era of specialized scientific scholarship and the best in the great tradition.

Lennox Grey,
Columbia University.

*Which brought out a first exploratory fact-finding study this year in Patricia Bessley's *Revival of the Humanities*, and will shortly issue Edna Hay's *Comparative Literature and the Humanities*.

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sophical and ethical conflict which underlines the whole play, the Renaissance concept of dualism. These things Mr. Mizener did by a careful analysis of specific scenes and speeches.

Mr. Brook's paper showed how some of the techniques ordinarily reserved for historical criticism may be used to illuminate the work of a contemporary author. He demonstrated by a thorough analysis of *The Killers* how an awareness of structure and detail may contribute to an understanding of the author's basic purpose, and how, in *The Killers*, it reveals the theme — the discovery of evil. He then pursued this theme through Hemingway's other writing, showing how such an examination of his work places Hemingway in the tradition of the "poets of the common man."

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Following the dinner at the Hotel Vendome on Saturday afternoon, Lenthiel H. Downs (Presbyterian College) and R. A. Jelliffe (Oberlin College) spoke upon the relation between the teaching of English and the preservation of the democratic way of life in America. Professor Downs advanced the view that it might be possible to stimulate undergraduates to appreciate the democratic tradition by teaching those literary works that exemplify the great strands in that tradition, especially the great strands that Arnold identified as Hebraism and Hellenism. What roused comment was the list of readings offered by Professor Downs as a basis for a course in the democratic tradition: the *Odyssey* Sophocles, Aristophanas, Plato's *Republic* and certain of the other dialogues such as the *Apology*, the Bible, St. Augustine, Chaucer, More's *Utopia*, Spenser's *Four Hymns*, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Browning, Tennyson, *Vanity Fair*, Arnold's *Hebraism and Hellenism*, Emerson, Hawthorne, Whitman, Willa Cather's *Death Comes to the Archbishop*, Benet's *John Brown's Body*, and Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*. There was comment upon the importance of Emerson and other American writers for this purpose.

Professor Jelliffe carried on the discussion by insisting that we must continue on the path indicated by Arnold — the complete development of the individual. He dealt with the failure of most teachers of English to overcome the indifference of the undergraduate to the values that might be offered him in courses in English. The major deficiency in our teaching of English, in his opinion, is a false "objectivity" that amounts in many cases to a fetish; it is this "objectivity" that impresses the undergraduate as being only a lack of conviction. He must, he said, take a stand and somehow discriminate ourselves and make our students discriminate.

The meeting on Saturday evening was devoted to required and elective courses in composition. The attendance was unusually large and the discussion lively. Theodore Morrison (Harvard University) treated the required course by deploring the "police" methods of teaching composition. The great aim ought to be not mere discipline in grammar and punctuation and "composition" but rather the developing of capacity of mind through the handling of language. Professor Morrison demanded a high degree of "content" in Freshman writing; he mentioned that large generalities are usually the freshman's substitute for thinking. Neither did he approve of the "survey of literature" type of freshman English, which encourages the native indolence of the beginning writer. The student, through individual guidance, must be made to feel that he needs to have the ability to say things. Professor Morrison assumed that what the student writes in Freshman English must spring from his work in his other courses, not only from subjects he feels appropriate to "English." He concluded with a plea that the colleges more clearly define their standards by informing secondary schools what they expect an average freshman to do. This definition might bring order and consistency into the teaching of secondary-school English. In the discussion that followed, Professor Morrison pointed out that there is, practically, a great advantage in the Harvard arrangement by which the staff of Freshman English is set off as a separate and entirely autonomous state from the Department of English; this arrangement virtually means that the course in Freshman English is administered by a college committee rather than by any one department. Thus the Freshman English course comes to be considered a matter of general college interest.

Finally, Edith C. Johnson (Wellesley College) devoted her discussion to the importance of the elective in composition. She outlined the plan for the major in composition offered by Wellesley, with its separate courses in the essay, biography, critical writing, narrative, and other special forms. Professor Johnson gave numerous illustrations of those Wellesley graduates who have proved the major in composition to be of the greatest value in living. Most of those who completed the composition major have found that they have gained a discipline of the mind, a power of observation, a fluency in expression, a critical discrimination, and a righter appreciation of what they read. Professor Johnson stressed the great importance of wide and accurate informaton on the part of teachers of advanced composition.

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